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LETTER DATED 14 SEPTEMBER 1999 FROM THE MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF AUSTRALIA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I am writing in response to your request to the Prime Minister regarding Australian leadership of the proposed multinational force in East Timor, a force which we anticipate will be mandated by the Security Council in the coming days and which has the agreement of the Government of Indonesia.

I am pleased to inform you that Australia would be willing to accept the leadership of the multinational force. As the Prime Minister has already informed you, we are also prepared to make a substantial contribution to the force itself.

As you would be aware, Australia has also been active in encouraging a wide range of countries to participate in the force. We look forward to working with regional and other countries to help resolve the situation in East Timor and, as an interim measure, to help bring the United Nations mandated tripartite process back on track until such time as a United Nations peacekeeping operation can be deployed.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your strong leadership on this issue. The United Nations commitment to resolving the problems of East Timor, including the outstanding work of the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) team led by Ian Martin, has been greatly appreciated by Australia and other members of the international community.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Alexander DOWNER

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